

Curbside by lavenderlow

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Summary:

There's something about those big, scared eyes and curly hair that makes her want to smile.

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In the summer of 1985, before Freshman year, Max knows there's something wrong with the way that her and Elle never talk. After Mike and Elle break up, it's the final push she needs to finally try to become friends with the still-stranger. Something about her, though? She can't just be her friend. She's head over heels in love.

Curbside

Author's Note:

wow! well! i've written so much stonathan content and i was talking to a friend of mine about lesbians in *Stranger Things*, and somehow for the past year i've been in the fandom, the idea of Elle and Max has been completely unbeknownst to me. So, when i heard about it as in "People write fanfiction for this!" I've decided to start writing a fanfiction about these two lesbian babes. I needed some representation in my life.

the title of this story comes from "Curbside" by Im Glad It's You.

the title of this chapter is from "Lonely Eyes" by The Front Bottoms.

Max knew that her and Elle's relationship was going to be bumpy.

In the beginning, Elle wanted nothing to do with her. At that time, she had been hard girl-crushing over *Mike Wheeler*, of all people. This was literally only because Elle thought he was cute. Well, now that she thinks about it, maybe there was some other bond beneath the surface of *Mike-Wheeler-Saved-My-Life*, because according to Lucas, before all of this stuff happened, Mike would never even think about dating a girl, let alone anybody. Something had to be different with Elle to him. But, no matter what was there, *love or not*, Max knew that the constant image of Mike and Elle's interlocked hands shoved in her face was absolutely not appealing. Hell, it seemed like the only thing that Elle could talk about was Mike when they were together- they dated for a few months, and then it came as a shock when all of a sudden they wouldn't stand next to each other anymore.

Will was the first one to comfort Mike. Max saw that, considering

after their breakup, Will and Mike would always end up talking to only each other, they'd stray off from the group, and they'd tend to just distance themselves from the rest of the party.

There wasn't really anyone to be the first person to comfort Elle. Mike was usually the first one to come to her aid, the first one to talk to her when she was let out of Hopper's *hell cabin* once a week- Mike was the only one that Max has ever seen Elle *really* talk to. Lucas explained to her, during the short time that he had a crush on her, that Elle and him had a big fight two years before, when they first met the girl. He told her stories of how they found her in the woods. He also told stories of the way that Mike almost died over the time through 1983 and 1984 when they saw her again- falling head over heels in love with the girl that had superpowers.

Elle was weird. But that didn't stop Max from approaching her about a week following Elle and Mike's breakup.

The day was hot in the summer of 1985, two days after school had ended, completing their final year of middle school. They sat outside on the high school football grounds, getting ready for the "*Summer Bash*" that was happening- which was really just going to be a crappy party coordinated by school officials that's serving lukewarm punch and bags of chips that are way overpriced. The only reason the party is all here is because most of the freshman class is there, too, and they all decided that they didn't want to miss out on the opportunity that some juniors and seniors might come and tell them about some house party down the street.

Will and Mike are sitting on the end of the bleachers, talking to each other, like they have been for the past week. Dustin and Lucas and one step above them, bickering about video games, like *they do* every single day.

And then, Elle is sitting close but just far enough to exclude herself from conversation to Dustin and Lucas, keeping quiet and her eyes trained on the back of Wheeler's head. There's something that pangs in Max's heart- maybe she feels sorry, maybe it's guilt that she hasn't tried to befriend her already- but that isn't directly her fault.

When Max first met Elle, she didn't say anything to her. That was in November, and it's June, now. And they still haven't exchanged many words since that first night. Max slightly did it out of spite- she was the fiery one out of the group, after all, and all of her friends didn't expect much else of her. She stood her ground, and if Elle didn't want to be friends, so be it. The only times they ever conversated was when they all played Dungeons and Dragons together.

"Max, come on, you're the Rouge! Just roll for Stealth!" Dustin bickered, his hands gesturing loudly as the party was stuck in a tough combat. Mike had set them up in a goblin dungeon to get some chest. Max thought the whole campaign was dumb, she played better in California, but she also had never played with this group of friends.

"Why can't Elle roll for Stealth? She's in front of all of us!" Max said, running her hands through her hair and tightening it into a loose ponytail. She looked over to Elle, who was sitting across from her at the tiny table, already holding the d-twenty in her hands.

"I'll roll. Stealth." She said, giving Max a glare before letting the die roll out of her hands, of course landing a natural twenty. Elle's eyes made their way to Mike's, his own lighting up and giving her praise. The rest of the table goes wild as she successfully lead the group into a sneak attack, praising Elle for what was literally only luck. Max scoffed and gave a slow, sarcastic applause, laying back in her chair waiting for her combat turn.

Max sits at the very bottom of the bleachers holding a coke and a small bag of chips. She debates on whether or not she really feels bad enough for the girl to approach her- but *look at her*. Elle looks like she's about to break down at any given moment. Max swears she sees her lip quivering as her hands are tucked into her lap, eyes trained on Mike's figure the step below her. She's quiet and trying to make herself look invisible. That's when Max assures herself in her mind that even if she doesn't like Elle, she can comfort her. It's almost inhumane to let her sit there alone, left to sob about her failed relationship.

Max starts up the bleachers, walking slowly so Elle knows she's coming. Their eyes lock when she's about five steps away, and Max feels like she's a deer caught in headlights.

"What?" Elle says, sharp and distinct, obviously trying to be intimidating even though Max could almost *feel* the pain behind her voice. Max assumes that this girl is probably an emotional mess right now- *what with the trauma of the years before* and being close to non-verbal with most other party members besides Mike, she probably does not have much of an outlet for girl related things. You can see the stress on her- her shoulder length, curly hair is disheveled, her clothes don't *really* match, and the dark circles around her eyes have gotten noticeably darker. Max feels bad for her, to an extent.

"Hey, Elle." Max says, making her way up the final five bleachers, sitting down at a comfortable foot or so away from the other girl. She sets down the coke and bag of chips in the middle of them, gesturing them to Elle. Her face distorts and changes, not with a smile, but rather with confusion, as her eyes go from the offering between them and Max.

"What?" Elle asks again, but this time, the threatening tone she used before is gone. It's softer, and Max is slightly surprised, hearing this

different person talk to her.

Realizing that Elle is now less hostile, Max takes the time to silently bring her hands to the goods between them. She cracks open the can of coke easily, and then opens the bag of chips and leaves them open between them. She looks up again, and elle still looks confused.

“You’re sitting up here, alone, and staring into the back of Mike Wheeler.” Max sighed, kicking her legs up and setting them on the bleacher below her. Her hands lay in her lap and she looks over to Elle, who has her legs tucked into her chest, her head held up by her knees. She can’t deny the slight blush that rises to her own face as Elle moves a piece of curly hair away from her eyes, looking down at the items between them. Max picks up the can of coke before Elle can, taking a sip and then setting it back down closer to the other. “You gotta tell me what’s on your mind, Elle. We’re the only two girls in this group. I can’t let you sit up here alone for the rest of highschool.”

Max takes note as Elle silently reaches a hand to the can of soda. “I’ve never had this before.” Elle speaks, softly, the sentence barely reaching Max’s ears. *Thanks for completely blowing off my plead of friendship*, Max thought, holding back the need to scoff as she watches Elle bring the can to her lips. She waits to see the girl’s reaction to the new taste of cola, *which*, if you ask Max, is absolutely not the best soda choice, but the concession stand didn’t have raspberry ginger-ale. It seems to only be a California thing. Either way, she watches as Elle’s face lights up at the can, once she takes it away from her lips, there’s still bits of it covering the top of her lip.

“I assume you like it, then.” Max says, grabbing the bag of chips and placing them in her lap. “You can have the rest of it.” She offers, looking over to Elle and watching the other girl’s face light up even brighter than it was when she tasted it.

“I can...have it?” Elle repeats, raising her eyebrows in what looked like disbelief, or could be surprise. Either way, Max nods and bites down on a chip, diverting her focus from the bickering boys that are starting to get bored, and to Elle, who was holding the can in her hands like a timid puppy.

“Yeah, have it.” Max said again, looking down into her lap with the bag of chips. She fell silent after that, occasionally eating another chip, sitting quietly next to Elle on the bleachers and letting the awkwardness fill the air.

There was something there that was making Max’s mind swarm. Why wasn’t Elle being rude to her? Why wasn’t she dismissing her like usual? Is it now, after being let go by Mike, that she’s finally realizing that sitting quiet and following behind people is going to get her nowhere?

Rude, Maxine, she tells herself, even though she knows it’s the truth.

Elle, sitting next to Max, sips on the cola like she’ll never have any more in the rest of her life. Max can’t explain why she’s looking at the can like it’s her life source, but she can’t deny that the way her eyes have been lit up (even though glossy from the crying she was probably doing before Max sat with her) the entire time is a comforting sight. It’s nice to see the other girl happy without the aid of the frog-looking boy that, in Max’s own opinion, Elle could do so much better than.

By sunset, more people start to arrive to the football field, and the

music is playing louder. Max silently bobs her head to the beat of *Should I Stay or Should I Go*, even though she's heard it a million times before and the band have become sellouts by now. Max has pitched in on a game of *Never Have I Ever* with the boys, and she's very close to just dropping out. The boys keep asking dumb questions to inherently target people, like Dustin said to Will, "*Never Have I Ever... had my fake body thrown into the quarry!*" which warranted a harsh slap to the back of Dustin's head from Max herself. She also saw out of the corner of her eye the slight smile that came from Elle, who was sitting away from the crowd, hands still locked over her can of soda.

Max is starting to retract herself from the game when she finally just scoots herself out of the circle to come sit by Elle once more. As she sits down again, albeit this time sitting closer, Elle drops the can from where it was being held over her face. No words- just actions, as per what was the usual with Elle.

"Do you want another one?" Max said, patting around her pockets to feel for her money. Then, as she remembers with a faint *oh shit*, she doesn't have any more money. She originally came with \$5, but she gave one each to Will, Mike and Lucas. She then spent the other two on the can of soda for Elle and her chips. Max starts to freak out because she's already dug her grave, and she's already thinking of possible solutions when Elle says something that makes her stop in her tracks, feeling like a deer caught in headlights for the second time that night.

"You'd...get me another one?" She asks, her brows furrowed and face locked in a state of disbelief. Had this girl not been offered anything like this before? Was Max crazy or has this girl never been shown a lick of hospitality? She really hoped it would be the former.

Max nodded, knowing that she was only digging her grave deeper. She tried thinking about what she could do, she was *going* to get Elle another can of soda, if her life depended on it or not- something about those big, scared eyes and curly hair makes her want to see her smile.

Then Max thought of the perfect plan.

“Have you ever had a sleepover?”

Author's Note:

this is going to be a multiple chapter storyy, ofc, and omg i cant wait for el/max sleepover qwlkilKWESg,,,my little lesbian heart is exploding!!!!

comments/con-crit/kudos are v much appreciated!!!

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